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Kirundi

Kirundi,[5][6] also known as **Rundi**,[2][7][8][9] is a Bantu language spoken by 9 million people in Burundi and adjacent parts of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in Uganda. It is the official language of Burundi. Kirundi is mutually intelligible with Kinyarwanda, an official language of Rwanda, and the two form part of the wider dialect continuum known as Rwanda-Rundi.[10]

Kirundi is natively spoken by the Hutu, including Bakiga and other related ethnicities, as well as Tutsi, Twa and Hima among others have adopted the language. Neighbouring dialects of Kirundi are mutually intelligible with Ha, a language spoken in western Tanzania.

Kirundi is one of the languages where Meeussen's rule, a rule describing a certain pattern of tonal change in Bantu languages, is active.

Rundi	
	Ikirundi
Native to	Burundi
Ethnicity	Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa
Native speakers	8.8 million (2007)[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo ▪ Atlantic–Congo ▪ Volta-Congo ▪ Benue–Congo ▪ Bantoid ▪ Southern Bantoid ▪ Bantu ▪ Northeast Bantu ▪ Great Lakes Bantu ▪ Rwanda-Rundi (D62) ▪ **Rundi**
Writing system	Latin
Official status	
Official language in	Burundi
Language codes	
ISO 639-1	`rn (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=rn)` Rundi
ISO 639-2	`run (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=377)` Rundi
ISO 639-3	`run` Rundi
Glottolog	`rund1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/rund1242)` Rundi[2] `rund1241 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/rund1241)` Rundi-Kitwa[3]
Guthrie code	`JD.62`[4]

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Phonology

Consonants

Although the literature on Rundi agrees on 5 vowels, the number of consonants can vary anywhere from 19 to 26 consonants.[11] The table below is compiled from a survey of academic acceptance of Rundi consonants.[12]

The Kirundi text on the back of the truck warns cyclists not to hold on to it.

		Labial	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal		m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
Plosive	voiceless	p	t			k	
	voiced	b	d		ɟ	g	
Affricate		p͡f	t͡s	t͡ʃ			
Fricative	voiceless	f	s	ʃ			h
	voiced	v	z	ʒ			
Approximant					j	w	
Flap			ɾ				
Trill			r				

Vowels

The table below gives the vowel sounds of Rundi.

	Front	Back
Close	i	u
Mid	e	o
Open	a	

All five vowels occur in long and short forms. The distinction is phonemic.[13]

Tone

Rundi is a tonal language. There are two essential tones in Rundi : high and low (or H and L). Since Rundi has phonemic distinction on vowel length, when a long vowel changes from a low tone to a high tone it is marked as a rising tone. When a long vowel changes from a high tone to a low tone, it is marked as a falling tone.[14]

Rundi is often used in phonology to illustrate examples of Meeussen's rule[15][16] In addition, it has been proposed that tones can shift by a metrical or rhythmic structure. Some authors have expanded these more complex features of the tonal system noting that such properties are highly unusual for a tone system.[17]

Phonotactics

Syllable structure in Rundi is considered to be CV, that is having no clusters, no coda consonants, and no complex vowel nuclei. It has been proposed that sequences that are CVV in the surface realization are actually CV in the underlying deep structure, with the consonant coalescing with the first vowel.[18]

Consonant harmony

Rundi has been shown to have properties of consonant harmony particularly when it comes to sibilants. Meeussen described this harmony in his essay and it is investigated further by others.[19] One example of this harmony is triggered by /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ and targets the set of /s/ and /z/ in preceding adjacent stem syllables.

Notes

1. Mikael Parkvall, "Världens 100 största språk 2007" (The World's 100 Largest Languages in 2007), in *Nationalencyklopedin*
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Rundi" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/rund1242). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
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10. Ethnologue, 15th ed.
11. Zorc and Nibagwire 2007, p. 23.
12. Zorc and Nibagwire 2007, p. 25.
13. Meeussen 1959
14. de Samie 2009
15. Myers 1987
16. Phillipson 2003

17. Goldsmith & Sabimana 1989
18. Sagey 1986
19. Ntihirageza 1993

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External links

- Free English-Kirundi Dictionary (http://www.matana.de/kirundi.pdf)
- Free Kirundi selfstudy course (http://www.matana.de/kirundi%20I.pdf)
- Free Kirundi grammar study book (http://www.matana.de/kirundi%20II.pdf)
- PanAfrican L10n page on Kirundi... (https://web.archive.org/web/20070321212136/http://www.panafril10n.org/wikidoc/pmwiki.php/PanAfrLoc/RwandaRundi)
- Learning Kirundi (https://web.archive.org/web/20080513124329/http://cecilia.ls.fi.upm.es/~jmartinez/wiki/index.php/Learning_Kirundi) (in Spanish)
- Online Kirundi/English dictionary, revised (http://www.matana.de/)
- Online Kirundi/English dictionary (http://amajambo.ijuru.com/)
- USA Foreign Service Institute Kirundi basic course (https://www.livelingua.com/fsi-kirundi-course.php)

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